

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-06 FCSC-01 L-03 JUSE-00 TRSE-00
EB-08 COME-00 H-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8191
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CPRS, PEPR, US, GE, GW
SUBJECT: TAGESSPIEGEL ARTICLE ON U.S. CLAIMS AGAINST
THE GDR.

REF: A) BERLIN 2287, B) BERLIN 5192

1. A SEPT 8 TAGESSPIEGEL ARTICLE DATED WASHINGTON
SEPTEMBER 7 AND SIGNED JUERGEN HORSCH (DPA) IS HEAD-
LINED "AN OLD BILL FOR THE GDR - AMERICANS WANT 888
MILLION DOLLARS FOR LOST PROPERTY". ARTICLE SAYS
15,000 AMERICANS WILL PRESENT TO THE GDR AN OLD BILL
IN THE NEAR FUTURE: 888 MILLION DOLLARS SHOULD BE PAID
BY EAST BERLIN AS COMPENSATION FOR REAL ESTATE, HOUSES,
BUSINESSES AND OTHER PROPERTY CONFISCATED BY THE NAZIS
AND TAKEN OVER BY THE GDR AFTER THE WAR. THE ARTICLE
QUOTES SEVERAL AMERICANS OF GERMAN ORIGIN AND NOTES
THERE ARE SEVERAL THOUSAND FORMER GERMAN JEWS AMONG
THE CLAIMANTS.

2. REFERRING TO THE U.S. FOREIGN CLAIMS SETTLEMENT
COMMISSION (FCSC), THE ARTICLE STATES THAT COMPUTER
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PRINTOUTS OF 3826 CLAIMS WITH A TOTAL OF 15,000 NAMES
ARE PILING UP ON THE DESK OF DAVID ROGERS OF THE FCSC.
THE ARTICLE ADDS THAT THE MAJOR PART OF THE CLAIMS HAVE
BEEN FILED BY INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, BUT ALSO BY
AMERICAN FIRMS SUCH AS ITT AND DUPONT. FURTHER, THAT
EXXON CORP. WOULD LIKE TO BE COMPENSATED WITH 10 MILLION
DOLLARS FOR ITS FILLING STATIONS FIRST CONFISCATED BY

THE THIRD REICH AND LATER BY THE GDR.

3. HORSCH GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THE DEADLINE FOR FILING CLAIMS WAS MAY 16 OF THIS YEAR AND THAT PRESUMABLY MORE THAN A YEAR WILL PASS BEFORE ALL CLAIMS HAVE BEEN CHECKED. HORSCH QUOTES MR. ROGERS AS SAYING THAT "SOME DEDUCTIONS FROM THE 888 MILLION DOLLARS ARE LIKELY TO BE MADE". AFTER THAT EXPERTS OF THE STATE DEPT. WILL ENTER INTO THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH EAST BERLIN. THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO ASSERT DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING DOCUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF CLAIMS AND QUOTES MR. ROGERS AS FOLLOWS: "OUR WORK HAS NOT BEEN FACILITATED BY THE GDR". HORSCH WRITES THAT, IN CONTRAST TO HUNGARY, FOR INSTANCE, WHICH PROVIDED EXTRACTS FROM REAL ESTATE REGISTRATIONS IN SIMILAR CASES, GDR AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT SHOWN THEMSELVES AS BEING READY TO COOPERATE. THE ARTICLE CLOSSES WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT THE GDR WILL PROFIT BY THE FAVORABLE EXCHANGE RATE OF \$1 4.20 EAST MARKS WHICH THE FCSC USES IN FIXING VALUES ON LOST PROPERTY.

4. COMMENT. WE CONSIDER THE APPEARANCE OF THE ARTICLE, AND PARTICULARLY THE QUOTES ATTRIBUTED TO MR. ROGERS, UNFORTUNATE AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME. WE DO NOT KNOW IF MR. ROGERS WAS QUOTED OUT OF CONTEXT OR NOT, AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY CLARIFICATION THE FCSC OR THE DEPT. MAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ON THE SUBSTANCE OF (1) HIS ASSERTIONS RE GDR "UNHELPLEFULNESS" AND THE ALLEGED AMOUNT OF THE CLAIMS TO BE PRESENTED AGAINST THE GDR. IN THE EVENT WE ARE ASKED BY GDR OFFICIALS ABOUT THE ARTICLE, WE WOULD PROPOSE TO SAY THAT WE SEE NO USEFUL POINT IN COMMENTING ON THE ARTICLE, THAT APPROPRIATE U.S. OFFICIALS ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH THEIR GDR COUNTERPARTS AS SOON AS THE LATTER ARE READY TO RESPOND TO OUR END-OF-MARCH PRESENTATIONS, AND THAT WE THINK SUCH MEETINGS, RATHER THAN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE, ACCURATE WAYS TO MOVE FORWARD ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. POLANSKY

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TAGS: CPRS, PEPR, SOPN, US, GC, GE
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